CRAWL CREEP AND SLITHER

THE CANDY FACE KILLERS

30 PG EBOOK ---26 remastered

To be continued series

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Jeenie James stood in front of the old renovated factory, her heart racing, nervous to be away from mom and sweet old grandma, Marla, it was creepy and a strange place to host a black summer camp, so so odd in many ways. “Somethings off” she thought to herself combing her hair down on both sides. “who thought of this as a camp, ugh” she said cringing while staring at her new canary yellow phone given as a gift last Christmas. It was her first day at summer camp, and she didn’t know what to expect. The camp was held in a building that looked like it had seen better days. Rusty bits of metal peeked through the cracked concrete walls, and broken windows stared blankly like eyes. Jeenie, a sixteen-year-old Black girl with mossy hair and bright eyes, felt a shiver run down her spine. She looked around her classmates on the old grey bus each carrying a back pack noisy as ever.

“move out the way” she demanded trying to clear the exit to get some sun light. Bossy and well dressed she was popular but didn’t want it , mostly quiet her only desired companion was her little brother bayley.

Her teacher, Ms. Grant, was unloading luggage from a small bus. She was a tall woman with a stern face, but Jeenie knew she could be kind and funny at times. “hurry up children and please shower quick” Other students gathered around, chatting and laughing often louder that necessary , but Jeenie felt a knot of anxiety in her stomach. She had always been shy, and now, in front of this creepy building, she felt even smaller.

“Come on, Jeenie! Don’t just stand there!” shouted a girl with short, spiky hair named Tara. Jeenie recognized Tara from school. They had a few classes together, but they had never really talked. Jeenie took a deep breath and joined the others.

“Welcome to Camp Shadow Creek!” Ms. Grant announced, clapping her hands. “This old factory has been remodeled for our needs.” Jeenie raised an eyebrow. Remodeled? It looked like it could collapse any second. Ms. Grant continued, “Let’s get our bags inside and begin our adventure!”

As they entered the building, Jeenie felt a chill in the air a presence cold and dark not fun like the ride over. The inside was dimly lit, and shadows danced along the walls. Jeenie couldn’t shake the feeling that someone was watching her. She looked around at her classmates. Tara

and another boy, Miles, were joking and laughing, but Jeenie felt uneasy almost restless and sick .

“Do you think this place has ghosts?” Miles B asked, grinning. Jeenie rolled her eyes. “Ghosts aren’t real,” she replied, trying to sound brave. The reality of leaving her mom and little brother bayley were starting to set in.

Later that evening, the group gathered for a campfire outside the factory. The sky turned a deep purple, and stars began to twinkle. Ms. Grant told stories of the factory’s history. “A hundred years ago, this was a place of work and life or black people, a candy factory ran by colored folk . But one night, something terrible happened a big fire and explosion many were trapped . Many workers disappeared, and the factory closed.”

Jeenie felt the warmth of the fire, but she couldn’t shake the cold feeling in her chest. As night fell, odd noises echoed from the factory they had been given lunches and games to play as they settled in to the old building. The wind howled, and Jeenie swore she heard whispers. She glanced at Tara, who seemed unfazed, but Jeenie could see the others were starting to feel nervous.

Suddenly, a loud crash came from inside the factory. The group gasped, and Ms. Grant quickly stood up. “Stay here! I’ll check it out,” she said, but Jeenie and several others followed her inside. The air felt thicker, almost like a fog. It was even darker inside, and as they walked, they heard footsteps behind them.

“What was that?” Tara whispered, her voice shaky. Jeenie felt her heart race. “I don’t know,” she replied, but her voice trembled too.

As they moved deeper into the building, they found an old room filled with broken machines and rotting wood. That’s when they saw something move in the shadows. “I want to see what’s in there,” she said, surprising herself. The others exchanged fearful glances but slowly followed her toward the door. The closer they got, the colder it became. Jeenie reached for the doorknob, her hand shaking.

As she opened the door, a rush of icy air swept over them. Inside was a narrow hallway that seemed to stretch on forever, walls lined with pictures of workers from long ago. Their faces wore expressions of sadness and fear many looked underpaid and poor. Jeenie felt her heart pounding in her chest. “We shouldn’t be here,” she whispered. Just a gut feeling mostly.

The birthday suprise

sprinkles.”

Jeanine hugged the bag. The thought of her grandma’s cupcakes was a small comfort, a taste of home in this strange, unsettling place. “Thanks, Mom.” Her mom had arrived making sure her little girl felt worthy at this new place. “I hope you like them honey, it took a while to bake these” “they taste great” she said wiping the

cupcakes from her mouth.

“Are you sure about this, Jeanine? This camp… it’s a bit… unusual a little tacky and ghetto too.” Her mom’s eyes darted towards the factory, a flicker of unease crossing her face.

“It’s a summer camp, Mom. For the summer games, it will teach you leadership and courage,” Jeanine said, trying to sound braver than she felt. “It’ll be fun. And the brochure said it’s located in a historic candy factory.”

With another strained smile, her mom drove away, leaving Jeanine standing alone at the gates with Patches and the cupcakes. The silence seemed to swallow the sound of the van’s engine. She turned back towards the building her shoes shuffling on the ground as the sun beat down her neck and shoulders.

A figure emerged from the shadows of the factory. It was a tall, gaunt man with eyes that seemed to gleam in the dim light. He wore a stained apron and a tall, white chef’s hat that was slightly askew.

“You must be Jeanine,” he said, his voice a dry rustle. “I am Mr. Putter, the head confectioner. Welcome to Hemlock’s Sweet Escapes.” He extended a hand that was unnaturally cold.

Jeanine shook it, her fingers tingling. “It’s nice to meet you, Mr. Putter.”

“And this is…?” He gestured to Patches.

“This is Patches,” Jeanine said. “My mom dropped him off for me.”

Mr. Putter’s lips stretched into a smile that didn’t reach his eyes. “A companion. Excellent. Animals can be… quite useful. Come, the other campers are waiting. We have a special project for your birthday.”

He led her through the creaking gates. The air inside the factory grounds was thick with the cloying scent of sugar, but beneath it, Jeanine detected something else, something metallic and unsettling. The factory itself was a labyrinth of dimly lit hallways and rooms filled with strange, old candy-making machinery. Dust motes danced in the shafts of light that pierced through the grimy windows.

They entered a large room where several other children, all around Jeanine’s age, were gathered. They looked nervous, their eyes wide. A girl with fiery red hair and a mischievous grin, introduced herself as Chloe.

“Hey! Happy birthday!” Chloe whispered, nudging Jeanine. “Did you hear about the midnight taffy pull?”

Before Jeanine could answer, Mr. Putter clapped his hands. “Attention, campers! Today, we begin our most cherished tradition. The Birthday Bonanza! Jeanine, your birthday is the perfect occasion for our special creation.”

He gestured towards a giant, cast-iron cauldron in the center of the room. It was stained and old, but a faint shimmer seemed to emanate from its depths.

“What is it?” Jeanine asked, her curiosity piqued.

“It’s our secret recipe,” Mr. Putter said, his voice dropping to a conspiratorial whisper. “A candy so unique, so delicious, it’s only made once a year, for a very special camper.”

He began to add ingredients to the cauldron: vats of syrupy goo, bags of shimmering sugar, and something that looked suspiciously like dried flowers. The mixture began to bubble and churn, emitting a strange, sweet aroma that made Jeanine’s head spin.

“Everyone,” Mr. Putter announced, “must contribute something to the Birthday Bonanza. Something… personal. A memory, a fear, a wish.”

The other campers exchanged uneasy glances. Jeanine felt a chill crawl up her spine. Patches began to growl, a low, rumbling sound from his chest.

Chloe, emboldened by the strange atmosphere, stepped forward. “I… I wish I was braver,” she mumbled, throwing a small, smooth stone into the cauldron. The mixture hissed.

Next, a quiet boy named Sam nervously offered a faded

photograph. “My dog,” he whispered. The photo dissolved as it touched the candy.

Jeanine looked at the cupcakes in her bag. They felt heavy, impossibly so. She thought of her mom, her worried face, her repeated warnings. She looked at Patches, who was now whimpering, his tail tucked between his legs.

“Jeanine?” Mr. Putter’s voice was insistent. “Your contribution?”

Jeanine’s gaze fell on one of the cupcakes, the one with the most sprinkles. It was almost pulsing with a strange energy. A memory flashed in her mind: her mom, her hand on the steering wheel, her voice a little too bright. She remembered her mom’s parting words: “And… don’t eat too much candy.”

Suddenly, the sweet smell of the candy seemed to turn bitter, acrid. A wave of nausea washed over her.

“I… I can’t,” Jeanine stammered. “I don’t want to.”

Mr. Putter’s smile faltered. His eyes narrowed, and the gleam intensified. “But, my dear. It is tradition. And you do not want to disappoint the Birthday Bonanza, do you?”

Patches let out a sharp bark, then a series of frantic yelps. He strained at the leash, pulling Jeanine towards the exit. Jeanine’s heart pounded. The candies on the table, the bright colors, the cloying sweetness – it all felt

like a trap.

She looked at the cauldron, then at the terrified faces of the other campers. Something was terribly wrong. This wasn’t just a candy camp. It was something far more sinister.

“Mom was right,” Jeanine whispered to herself. “This place is creepy.”

With a surge of adrenaline, she grabbed Patches’ leash and bolted. The other campers, sensing her urgency, followed suit. Mr. Putter let out a roar of frustration that echoed through the cavernous factory. The Birthday Bonanza bubbled ominously, its sickly sweet scent filling the air as the children, and a small, brave dog, ran for their lives. The next chapter of Jeanine's story was just beginning, and it was going to be a very different kind of sweet.

Jayline is gone

The summer sun beat down on Camp Sugar Rush, but inside the main lodge, a chill had settled. It was early morning, and the air still held the lingering scent of stale cotton candy and something else… something metallic and sweet. Maya, the camp leader, a young woman with bright eyes and a no-nonsense attitude, stood by an empty bunk. Jaylin’s bunk.

“He’s gone,” Maya said, her voice low. She looked at the other counselors, their faces pale in the dim light. There

was Ben, always joking, but today his smile was forced. Sarah, the art teacher, usually so calm, wrung her hands. And then there was Mr. Henderson, the camp owner, a man whose weathered face held more secrets than a candy wrapper.

“Gone how, Maya?” Mr. Henderson asked, his voice raspy. He was a man who preferred to stay in his office, surrounded by old candy-making machines, but a missing camper brought him out.

“His bed is empty,” Maya explained. “Completely empty. Like he just… vanished.”

Jaylin was the quietest camper, a shy boy who preferred drawing in his sketchbook to playing games. He wouldn’t just wander off.

“Did anyone hear anything last night?” Ben asked, his voice a little too loud.

Sarah shook her head. “No. I slept right through. It was quiet, too quiet maybe.”

Maya knelt by Jaylin’s bed. The sheets were undisturbed, not a wrinkle. But on the floor, near the foot of the bed, was something odd. A faint, sticky trail. It looked like… candy. Melted candy.

“What is this?” she murmured, touching the trail with a fingertip. It was warm and gooey.

Mr. Henderson leaned closer, his eyes narrowed. “That’s not normal. We keep the kitchens locked tight at night.”

They followed the trail. It led out of the cabin, across the dew-kissed grass, and then, impossibly, up the side of the main lodge. The sticky footprints, undeniably candy-like, led to the roof.

“The roof?” Ben exclaimed, his eyes wide. “How did he even get up there?”

Maya didn’t answer. She was already heading for the ladder that led to the roof access. The others followed, their hearts pounding. The morning air felt heavier now, charged with an unknown dread.

On the roof, the footprints were clearer, leading towards the center. And there, huddled in a heap, was Jaylin. He was curled up, his eyes squeezed shut, his breathing shallow. His clothes were stained with something red and sticky.

Maya rushed to his side. “Jaylin! Jaylin, wake up!”

He stirred, a low moan escaping his lips. His eyes fluttered open, but they were unfocused, glassy. “Wha… where am I?”

“You’re on the roof, Jaylin,” Maya said gently. “Are you hurt?”

He looked around, a flicker of confusion crossing his face.

“I don’t… I don’t remember.”

“You don’t remember how you got up here?” Sarah asked, her voice trembling.

Jaylin shook his head slowly. “I remember… I was dreaming. Something about… rivers of chocolate. And… sticky hands pulling me.”

The candy footprints were everywhere now, a bizarre, disturbing pattern across the tar. They were a deep, cherry red, and they looked fresh, as if made only moments ago. The smell of burnt sugar was stronger here, cloying and sickening.

“This is crazy,” Ben muttered. “It’s like… like something out of a nightmare.”

Mr. Henderson walked around Jaylin, his gaze sweeping over the rooftop. He stopped near the edge, pointing. “Look at this.”

Etched into the tar, near the candy footprints, were strange symbols. They were swirling, almost organic, like melted candy that had been twisted into shapes.

“What are those?” Maya asked, a shiver running down her spine.

“I’ve seen them before,” Mr. Henderson said, his voice barely a whisper. “In the old blueprints. They were… safety warnings. For the machinery.”

He looked at Jaylin, then at the symbols. “This place… it’s built on more than just a candy factory, you know. It was built on… a very old foundation.”

Jaylin whimpered, clutching his head. “It hurts… my head.”

“We need to get him downstairs,” Maya said, her protective instincts kicking in. But as she reached for him, Jaylin flinched.

“Don’t touch me,” he whispered. His eyes were wide with fear, and for a moment, Maya saw something in them that wasn’t Jaylin. Something ancient and hungry.

The candy footprints seemed to pulse in the morning light, a sticky, red warning. The theme of Camp Sugar Rush had always been sweet and fun, but now, on this creepy old roof, with a missing boy and strange symbols, Maya felt a sickening certainty. The next chapter of Camp Sugar Rush was not going to be sweet at all. It was going to be a story of sugar, secrets, and something far more sinister lurking beneath the surface.

Mr donald quits

Mr. Donald was a security guard. He worked at a place that used to be a candy factory. Now, it was a summer camp for teenagers. It was an old camp, and some people thought it was creepy. Mr. Donald didn’t believe in ghosts, but he did believe in doing his job right.

His job was to walk around the camp at night. He checked all the rooms to make sure everything was safe. He had a big flashlight and a walkie-talkie. Most nights were quiet. The teenagers were asleep in their beds. The only sounds were crickets and the wind blowing through the old trees.

But tonight felt different. Mr. Donald had a strange feeling. He started his rounds in the main building. It was once the candy factory's office. Now it had rooms for the older teens. He walked down the long hallway. His flashlight beam cut through the darkness. Dust motes danced in the light. The walls were painted a faded blue. Old posters of candy bars still hung in some rooms, a reminder of the past.

As he walked, he heard a noise. It was a soft thump, like something falling. He stopped. He held his breath and listened. Silence. He shook his head. "Just my imagination," he muttered to himself. He continued his patrol.

He reached the end of the hallway. He turned to go back. That's when he heard it again. This time, it was louder. A scuffling sound, like shoes dragging on the floor. It seemed to come from one of the rooms. He moved closer, his heart beating a little faster. He shone his flashlight on the door. It was slightly ajar.

Mr. Donald pushed the door open slowly. The room was dark. His flashlight beam swept across bunk beds, desks, and an empty closet. Nothing. No one. He felt a chill run down his spine. He told himself it was just the old building

settling.

He closed the door and continued down the hall. As he passed another room, he heard a whisper. It was faint, barely audible. He stopped again. He strained his ears. The whisper stopped. He waited. Nothing. He was starting to feel uneasy. He'd worked here for six months, and nothing like this had ever happened before.

He walked towards the back of the building, where the younger teens stayed. The air here felt colder. The rooms were smaller, with bright, cheerful posters that now looked out of place in the dim light. He checked each room carefully. All the beds were occupied by sleeping teenagers.

As he turned to leave the last room, he heard a squeaking sound. It was like a swing set moving. But there were no swing sets inside. The sound came from the hallway. Mr. Donald's hand tightened on his flashlight. He walked out of the room, his senses on high alert.

The hallway was empty. He shone his light everywhere. He even checked under the stairs. Nothing. He was about to dismiss it when he heard a faint giggle. It was a child's giggle, but it sounded wrong, hollow.

He started to walk faster, his boots echoing on the wooden floor. He wanted to finish his rounds and get back to the security office. He felt like he was being watched. The feeling grew stronger with every step.

He reached the main staircase. He was about to go down when he heard footsteps behind him. They were light, quick footsteps. He spun around, his flashlight beam flashing. The hallway was empty. But the footsteps kept coming, getting closer.

Suddenly, something hit him hard on the shoulder. It wasn't a punch, more like a solid bump. He stumbled forward, dropping his flashlight. It rolled and the light went out, plunging him into darkness. He heard a rush of air, like someone running past him very fast.

He scrambled on the floor, trying to find his flashlight. His hands brushed against something cold and smooth. It was a piece of candy, a hard, round candy. He picked it up. It was a bright red lollipop, still in its wrapper. He didn’t remember seeing any candy around.

He finally found his flashlight. He turned it on. The hallway was empty. He could hear his own breathing, ragged and fast. He looked at the candy in his hand. It felt wrong.

He stood there for a long moment, the silence pressing in on him. He couldn’t shake the feeling that he wasn’t alone. The giggling, the thumping, the bump on his shoulder. It was too much. He was a security guard, not a ghost hunter.

He made his way to the security office. He sat down at his desk, his hands trembling slightly. He looked at the

lollipop again. He knew then that he couldn’t stay. This place was too strange, too unsettling. He picked up his phone and called his supervisor.

“I’m sorry,” he said, his voice a little shaky. “I have to quit. Effective immediately. This place… it’s not for me.” He didn’t explain. He didn’t need to. The creepy old candy factory summer camp had won. He walked out into the night, leaving the candy wrapper on his desk. He never looked back. The next chapter of his life would not be spent in this pl

The boiler room

The old summer camp felt different at night. Jeanie shivered, pulling her thin blanket tighter. Moonlight painted long, spooky shadows across the peeling paint of the dormitory walls. This place, once a sweet candy factory, was now a summer facility for teens, but it held a creepy vibe. Jeanie and Burtus, her best friend, shared a room on the second floor. The air was thick with the smell of stale candy and something else, something damp and old.

"Did you hear that?" Burtus whispered, his voice tight. He sat up in his bed, eyes wide and scanning the dark corners of the room.

Jeanie listened. At first, there was nothing but the usual night sounds of an old building settling. Then, a faint scraping sound, like fingernails on metal, drifted up from somewhere below. It was faint, but definitely there.

"Yeah," Jeanie whispered back. "It sounds like it's coming from the boiler room."

The boiler room was off-limits. It was in the dusty, forgotten basement of the old factory section, a place filled with rusting machinery and shadows that seemed to move on their own. Stories circulated among the campers about strange noises and things seen in the dark. Most people dismissed them as ghost stories, but tonight, the scraping sound felt too real.

Burtus swung his legs over the side of his bed. "We have to check it out."

Jeanie hesitated. Her heart pounded in her chest like a trapped bird. Every instinct told her to stay put, to pull the blankets over her head and pretend she heard nothing. But the curiosity, that nagging, thrilling curiosity, was too strong.

"Okay," she breathed. "But we have to be quiet. Really quiet."

They slipped out of their beds, their bare feet making no sound on the creaky wooden floor. The hallway was dark, lit only by slivers of moonlight from the grimy windows. The air grew colder as they crept down the stairs, the scraping sound growing louder, more insistent. It was a chilling noise, a sound that spoke of something desperate and hungry.

They reached the basement door. It was heavy and made

of dark wood, with a rusted iron handle. Burtus turned it slowly, the click of the latch sounding like a gunshot in the silence. The door creaked open, revealing a black abyss.

The smell of damp earth and rust hit them first, stronger now. The scraping sound was right in front of them, coming from behind another door, a thick metal one that led into the boiler room. They tiptoed across the concrete floor, the darkness swallowing them whole. They could see the faint outline of old pipes and machinery, like sleeping metal monsters.

As they got closer to the boiler room door, they saw a faint light filtering through the cracks. It was a flickering, orange glow, like from a weak lantern. The scraping stopped for a moment, and then a low, guttural humming began. It was a sound that made the hairs on Jeanie's arms stand on end.

Burtus put a finger to his lips, his eyes fixed on the door. Jeanie held her breath, straining to hear. The humming continued, joined by a soft, rustling sound, like dry leaves skittering across a floor.

Slowly, carefully, Burtus reached out and peered through a small, grimy window set into the metal door. Jeanie leaned in beside him, her own breath catching in her throat.

Inside the boiler room, illuminated by the flickering light, were figures. They were indistinct, shrouded in shadow,

but they were definitely people. Or, at least, they looked like people. They moved with a strange, jerky motion, their bodies hunched. But the most terrifying thing was that Jeanie couldn't see their faces. Where faces should have been, there were only dark, empty voids. It was as if the darkness itself had taken shape.

They seemed to be gathered around something on the floor, their shadowy hands working at it. The humming grew louder, more discordant, a mournful, unsettling sound. Then, one of the figures, a tall, spindly one, raised its head. Even without a visible face, Jeanie felt an intense, chilling awareness directed at them.

Suddenly, a loud bang echoed from inside the boiler room, and the figures froze. A collective, rasping breath filled the small space. Jeanie and Burtus stumbled back from the door, their hearts hammering against their ribs.

Then, they heard it. A furious scratching, a frantic clawing, directly beneath the boiler room door. It was the same sound they had heard from their room, but now it was louder, more desperate, filled with a raw, unreasoning hunger.

"Run!" Burtus hissed, grabbing Jeanie's arm.

They didn't need to be told twice. They scrambled back across the basement, their bare feet slapping against the cold concrete. The scratching sound followed them, echoing up the stairs, a relentless pursuit. They could hear the heavy thud of the basement door being pushed

open behind them.

They burst into the hallway, not daring to look back. The dormitory felt impossibly far away. The scratching sound seemed to be everywhere now, a terrifying symphony of desperation. They could feel a cold, unseen presence chasing them, an ancient hunger awakened.

They reached their room, slamming the door shut behind them, fumbling with the lock. They leaned against it, panting, their bodies trembling. The scratching continued for a moment, right on the other side of their door, then faded into a low, mournful whine.

Jeanie looked at Burtus, her eyes wide with terror. "What were those things?"

Burtus shook his head, his face pale. "I don't know. But we can never go down there again."

They huddled together on their beds, the thin blankets offering little comfort. The old candy factory was no longer just creepy. It was dangerous. And they knew, with a certainty that chilled them to the bone, that this was only the beginning of their terrifying chapter at the old summer camp. The noise had stopped, but the fear remained, a cold, sharp presence

The hay ride

The old summer camp loomed, a shadow against the setting sun. It wasn't really a camp anymore, not like the

ones with s'mores and campfire songs. This place, Camp Sweet Surrender, had once been a candy factory. Now, it was a facility for teenagers, a place filled with whispers and strange rules. Jeanie shivered, pulling her thin jacket tighter. Beside her, Burtus, all lanky limbs and nervous energy, fiddled with the zipper of his hoodie.

"You sure about this, Jeanie?" Burtus asked, his voice a low rumble. "This place gives me the creeps."

"We have to, Burtus," Jeanie replied, her voice firm but laced with a tremor. "It's the games. We can't let Northwood High win the candy trophy. Not again."

Northwood High was their rival, a school known for its athletic prowess and its smug captain, Marcus. This year, Camp Sweet Surrender was hosting the annual summer games, a series of challenges designed to test skill and teamwork. The final event, and the one they dreaded most, was the haunted pumpkin patch hayride.

They were met by Sarah, their team leader, a girl with a no-nonsense attitude and eyes that missed nothing. "Alright, Sweet Surrender," she announced, clapping her hands together. "Tonight, we take back the trophy. Northwood's hayride is legendary for its scares, but we're going to make ours legendary for the win."

The air crackled with a mixture of excitement and apprehension. Other members of their team milled around: quiet, observant Maya, who always seemed to know more than she let on, and the boisterous twins, Finn

and Chloe, whose laughter could usually dispel any tension.

As darkness fell, the camp transformed. The old factory buildings, usually emitting a faint sweetness, now seemed to exhale a chilling aura. The games began. There were relay races through the darkened woods, scavenger hunts where clues were hidden in the abandoned candy-making machinery, and even a blindfolded obstacle course that involved navigating through vats of what smelled suspiciously like caramel. Sweet Surrender performed well, fueled by Jeanie's determination and Burtus's surprising agility.

Then came the hayride. The rival teams gathered at the edge of a vast pumpkin patch. The night was unusually still, the only sound the rustling of dry leaves. Northwood’s hayride was a spectacle. Actors dressed as grotesque candy characters jumped out from behind pumpkins, their roars echoing through the night. A giant, dismembered gummy bear head rolled across their path. Jeanie felt a prickle of fear, but she focused on the task. They had to win.

Sweet Surrender's hayride was meant to be scarier, more psychological. Sarah had designed it to play on their deepest fears. As their tractor chugged through the patch, shadows danced, and the air grew heavy with an unsettling silence. Strange music, like a distorted carousel tune, drifted through the darkness. Jeanie saw figures lurking at the edges of her vision, too quick to be sure of what they were. Burtus was beside her, his

knuckles white as he gripped the side of the hay wagon.

"Did you see that?" he whispered, pointing to a cluster of pumpkins. "I swear something moved."

Jeanie strained her eyes, but saw nothing. The tension was unbearable. The hayride seemed to stretch on forever, each turn revealing a new, unsettling tableau. A scarecrow with button eyes that seemed to follow them. A figure cloaked in shadows, just beyond the reach of their flashlight beams.

Suddenly, the tractor lurched to a halt. The distorted music stopped. An unnerving silence descended. Sarah’s voice, usually so confident, was shaky. "What's happening?"

A low, guttural growl echoed from the darkness. Then, a bloodcurdling scream ripped through the night. It was Finn. The twins were usually inseparable.

Panic flared. Burtus scrambled to his feet. "Finn!"

They all stood up, peering into the inky blackness. The other teams, who had been ahead of them, were already disembarking, their faces pale.

"Finn! Chloe!" Jeanie called out, her voice hoarse.

There was no response. Only the rustling of leaves and the distant hoot of an owl. Sarah, her face grim, grabbed a flashlight. "We have to look for them."

They disembarked, their hearts pounding. The pumpkins seemed to watch them, their carved grins leering. They fanned out, calling out Finn’s name. Maya, her eyes wide, pointed to the ground.

There, half-hidden amongst the dried stalks, was a single, muddy shoe. It was Finn's shoe. And sticking to the side of it, undeniably, was a thick, sticky glob of hot, melted candy. It smelled faintly of cherry.

Burtus stared at it, his breath catching in his throat. "What… what happened to him?"

The silence that followed was heavier than any scare they had encountered on the hayride. The trophy, the games, all of it suddenly felt insignificant. A cold dread washed over them. Finn was gone. And all that was left was his shoe, a chilling testament to something far more sinister than a rival school's prank. The old candy factory, Camp Sweet Surrender, had a new, terrifying secret.

The bed check and jeanie

The old summer camp smelled like stale sugar and damp wood. It used to be a candy factory, everyone knew that. Now, it was a place for teens, a place called "Sweet Escapes." Jeanie didn't think it was much of an escape. The walls were peeling, and the air always felt thick and sticky, like forgotten taffy.

Tonight was different. The usual buzz of nervous energy in their shared room was gone, replaced by a heavy

quiet. Jeanie and Burtus lay in their bunk beds, listening. The floorboards creaked outside their door. It was bedtime inspection. Usually, Mr. Gable, their counselor, would flick on the harsh fluorescent lights, his shadow long and spindly. But tonight, it was dark. Pitch black.

"Yo, Jeanie, you hear that?" Burtus whispered, his voice a low rumble.

"Yeah, man. He's acting kinda weird," Jeanie replied, pulling the thin blanket tighter. She could hear shuffling sounds, not the usual footsteps. And a strange, hollow thudding, like something heavy being dragged.

The door creaked open. A shape stood in the doorway, silhouetted against the faint moonlight seeping through the grimy window. It wasn't Mr. Gable. This figure was too tall, too wide. And the head. It was enormous, round, and bumpy, like a giant, gnarled pumpkin. No eyes, no nose, just a gaping, dark maw where a mouth should be. A cold dread washed over Jeanie. This wasn't a costume.

The pumpkin-headed figure moved with an unnatural slowness, gliding rather than walking. It didn't speak. It just… was. It shuffled towards the beds, the hollow thudding growing louder with each step. Burtus was frozen, his eyes wide in the darkness. Jeanie could feel her heart pounding against her ribs, a frantic drumbeat against the silence.

The figure stopped at the bunk next to Burtus. A small boy, Timmy, who had been fast asleep, whimpered. The

pumpkin head tilted, and a long, shadowy arm reached out. Jeanie couldn't see any fingers, just a dark, indistinct mass. It touched Timmy’s forehead, and he went limp, his breathing stopping. Jeanie squeezed her eyes shut, praying she was dreaming.

When she dared to open them, the figure was lifting Timmy. He was like a doll, his small body unmoving. The pumpkin-headed thing turned and glided out of the room, the door clicking shut behind it. The thudding faded into the night.

Silence returned, heavier than before. Jeanie and Burtus stared at the empty bunk. Timmy was gone.

"What was that, man?" Burtus finally choked out. "That wasn't Mr. Gable."

"I don't know, Burtus. But… Timmy’s gone." Jeanie’s voice trembled.

The next morning, the camp was a whirlwind of panicked whispers. Timmy was missing. Counselors ran around, their faces etched with worry. Parents were called. But there was no sign of Timmy. The police came, asking questions, but they didn't seem to know what to do. How do you explain a giant pumpkin head?

"This whole place is sus," a girl named Maya muttered as she passed Jeanie and Burtus by the abandoned ice cream parlor, its once bright colors now faded and peeling. "Ever since they turned this old candy factory

into some whack teen spot, things have been off. It’s giving major haunted vibes, for real."

"I'm saying," Burtus chimed in, his voice still a little shaky. "Last night, during bed check, it was straight up terrifying. Our counselor, Mr. Gable, he... he wasn't Mr. Gable. It was some freak with a pumpkin for a head. Took Timmy right out of his bed."

"A pumpkin head?" Maya scoffed, but her eyes were wide. "Nah, man, you guys are tripping. It's probably some messed-up prank, right? Like, a new counselor with a weird costume."

"This ain't no costume, Maya. This was... evil. The whole vibe was off. It didn't even look human. And then Timmy just vanished. Poof!" Jeanie added, feeling a fresh wave of fear.

"So, you’re saying this place is actually haunted?" a boy named Jamal asked, overhearing them. He was known for his skepticism. "Come on, y'all. This camp is old, yeah, and maybe a little creepy, but it’s just a camp. There’s got to be a logical explanation for Timmy being gone."

"Logical? Jamal, you didn't see it. It was straight up nightmare fuel," Burtus insisted. "It was like something out of a horror flick, but it was real."

Later that day, while exploring the deserted candy factory section of the camp, Jeanie, Burtus, and Maya found a hidden room. It smelled strongly of sugar, but it

was also damp and metallic. In the center of the room was a massive, old candy-making machine, its gears rusted and its vats stained. And on the floor, scattered around the machine, were small, discarded pieces of brightly colored wrappers. Wrappers that looked eerily familiar. They were the same kind Timmy always used for his favorite candy.

A chill ran down Jeanie’s spine. The machine whirred to life, a low groan echoing through the room. The same hollow thudding sound from last night started, coming from within the machine. The air grew colder. They backed away slowly, their eyes fixed on the churning gears, a horrifying realization dawning. The old candy factory wasn't just a camp. It was still making something. And the ingredients were disappearing. The creepy old summer camp had a new, terrifying recipe.